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Definition Paper

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Audience: Someone who wants to know what being Preppy is.

Prep

In a large crowd of people it doesn’t take long to determine who is *preppy*, and who is not. Being *preppy* sets you apart from others, not only in personal style, but lifestyle. It’s more than a summer house in Nantucket or owning an argyle sweater from Jcrew. Being *preppy* is a commitment-something you are born into without choice. Something that not only shows your background, but defines your social status.

One of the most vital parts of being *preppy* is how you look on the outside. While this may appear shallow, it’s the truth. A real prep knows where to shop. Vineyard Vines, Jcrew, Ralph Lauren, and Lilly Pulitzer are the staples of any preppy wardrobe. As the sweltering summer months approach and preps flee to their respective summer homes they never forget to bring appropriate attire. You will never catch a prep wearing sweatpants. Instead they will opt for a pair of yoga pants or leggings to sleep in or just wear around on a lazy day. However, keep in mind that it is rare for any prep to have a lazy day as they are usually very busy. On any typical summer day a prep can be seen sporting a classic pair of Jcrew chino shorts and a designer top. This outfit is usually topped off with a Vineyard Vines printed belt and Sperry Topsiders. A true prep understands the importance of always looking put together and never forgets to accessorize properly. When the cold winter months come lurking back to the East Coast, preps don’t just hide away inside, they embrace the snow and all of its fashionable glory. A prep settles for nothing short of the best, so when it comes to snow gear a prep can usually be seen wearing some variation of North Face. Not only do these coats all ensure the classic preppy style, but also promises warmth on those chilly weekends spent at the ski house. Any respectable female prep must own at least one pair of classic leather boots to compliment her winter wardrobe, however, they must be flat- absolutely no heels. A prep knows the difference between looking trashy and looking classy.

As you may already know, the *preppy* lifestyle is well defined by one’s education. All preps are expected to have attended at least a four year college if not graduate school. Any legitimate prep knows the importance of being well educated. While the rest of us rough it out in public school, most preps find themselves attending college preparatory schools usually in the East Coast. Many popular schools for preps include Deerfield Academy, Choate Rosemary Hall, and Andover. With their high price tag and selectivity, they ensure the best education and guarantee acceptance to equally *preppy* colleges. Because of the high standards for education, preps usually settle for nothing but the best when it comes to college- the Ivy League. It’s nearly impossible to find any preps at Brown University, as most flock to the Holy Trinity- Harvard, Princeton, and Yale. These college atmospheres will eventually lead to the best jobs, the best networking, and the greatest chance of intermingling with thousands of other preps.

While preps value their education, they never forget the importance of taking a break and having a summer vacation. It was the most famous prep, Cornelius Vanderbilt II, who instilled the importance of a summer home when he built The Breakers Mansion in Newport, RI in 1895. Ever since, preps all over the East Coast have been flocking to their respective summer homes in Nantucket, Martha’s Vineyard, and Block Island year after year. A prep’s summer activities include, but are not subject to, activities such as sailing, tanning, reading books, and playing sports. It is of great value to be athletic in the preppy world as you may often find yourself challenged to a casual round of single’s tennis when you least expect it. Not to worry though- a real prep is always prepared for this as they probably took tennis lessons at the country club growing up.

In certain ways, it’s not hard to find a prep. They can be linked to many other organizations that describe their personalities, lifestyles, political viewpoints, and social status’. A prep can typically be categorized as a WASP. The term WASP refers to anyone of a higher moral/social status who is a White-Anglo-Saxon-Protestant. While not everyone who is a WASP is a prep, most preps are considered WASPs due to their New England roots and proper upbringing. During any given political season, it is also quite easy to find a prep supporting the Republican party. With candidates promising to eliminate tax cuts on the super wealthy, preps see it in the interest of keeping their Aspen ski homes that they support the right side. One of the most famous preps of our time, George W. Bush, is a perfect example. Not only was Bush a Republican, but he also attended prestigious Yale University and Harvard Business School. After being elected President of the United States in 2000, Bush became known for inviting world leaders such as Margaret Thatcher, and Vladimir Putin to his summer compound in Kennebunkport, Maine. While Bush is an extreme example, he certainly encompasses the many facets of the *preppy* lifestyle and political categorizations.

Whether it’s a summer home, a pair of shoes, or a college diploma, preps know how to do it right. A prep is not just someone who can pick up a tennis racquet or owns a polo t-shirt. Preppy is a style and lifestyle commitment ensuing class, elegance, and success.

Works Cited

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